



**University of
Zurich**^{UZH}

**Zurich Open Repository and
Archive**

University of Zurich
University Library
Strickhofstrasse 39
CH-8057 Zurich
www.zora.uzh.ch

Year: 2013

The communicational dimension of democratic accountability in metropolitan governance: Media reporting and perceived legitimacy in four European cities

Christmann, Anna ; Kübler, Daniel ; Hasler, Karin ; Marcinkowski, Frank ; Schemer, Christian

Abstract: As cities grow and expand, complex network governance (advocated by the so-called ‘new regionalism’) is increasingly important for policy-making in metropolitan areas. These arrangements have often been criticised as a threat to legitimacy, as they involve a wide array of policy-actors and blurrs and dilute electoral accountability. This paper focuses on the communicational dimension of democratic accountability in metropolitan governance, by exploring the role of the media. We use data from a standardized content analysis of newspaper coverage on metropolitan policy-making in four European mega- and metacities (Paris, London, Berlin and Zurich) and examine their relationship to legitimacy perceptions at the individual level on the basis of survey data. We find that institutional differences in metropolitan governance are quite adequately reflected in media reports. The results also show that media content indeed is correlated with citizen perceptions of legitimacy, i.e. trust in government as well as satisfaction with democracy. We therefore interpret the media as an additional - communicational - channel of democratic accountability in metropolitan governance.

Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich

ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-88777>

Conference or Workshop Item

Accepted Version

Originally published at:

Christmann, Anna; Kübler, Daniel; Hasler, Karin; Marcinkowski, Frank; Schemer, Christian (2013). The communicational dimension of democratic accountability in metropolitan governance: Media reporting and perceived legitimacy in four European cities. In: 43rd Conference of the Urban Affairs Association, San Francisco, 3 April 2013 - 6 April 2013, Urban Affairs Association.

The communicational dimension of democratic accountability in metropolitan governance.

Media reporting and perceived legitimacy in four European cities

Anna CHRISTMANN*, Daniel KÜBLER*, Karin HASLER*,
Frank MARCINKOWSKI** and Christian SCHEMER**

**Department of Political Science and Centre for Democracy Studies,
University of Zurich*

*** Department of Communication, University of Münster*

*** Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, University of Zurich*

Paper prepared for presentation at the 43rd Conference of the Urban Affairs Association
in San Francisco, April 3-6. 2013

*A previous version of this paper was presented at the IPSA World Congress of Political Science, Madrid,
July 8-12 2012*

3rd Draft

Date: 15.03.2013

Contact author:

Anna Christmann
University of Zurich
Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau (ZDA)
Küttigerstrasse 21
CH - 5000 Aarau
Switzerland
Email: anna.christmann@zda.uhz.ch

1. Introduction	3
2. New regionalism and the media, or: the communicational dimension of democratic accountability	4
2.1 The media as an independent accountability forum.....	5
2.2 Media reporting and citizens' perceptions of legitimacy	6
3. Research design and data	7
3.1 Case selection	8
3.2 Newspaper content data	8
3.4 Survey data.....	10
4. Results	11
4.1 How the media report on metropolitan policy-making.....	11
4.2 Media reporting and citizen perceptions of legitimacy	18
5. Conclusion.....	21
6. References	22
7. Methodological appendix	26

Abstract

As cities grow and expand, complex network governance (advocated by the so-called 'new regionalism') is increasingly important for policy-making in metropolitan areas. These arrangements have often been criticised as a threat to legitimacy, as they involve a wide array of policy-actors and blurrs and dilute electoral accountability. This paper focuses on the communicational dimension of democratic accountability in metropolitan governance, by exploring the role of the media. We use data from a standardized content analysis of newspaper coverage on metropolitan policy-making in four European mega- and metacities (Paris, London, Berlin and Zurich) and examine their relationship to legitimacy perceptions at the individual level on the basis of survey data. We find that institutional differences in metropolitan governance are quite adequately reflected in media reports. The results also show that media content indeed is correlated with citizen perceptions of legitimacy, i.e. trust in government as well as satisfaction with democracy. We therefore interpret the media as an additional - communicational - channel of democratic accountability in metropolitan governance.

1. Introduction

The modern metropolis is characterised by fragmented governance. An increasing majority of the world's citizens lives in metropolitan areas that are characterised by geopolitical fragmentation (Hoffmann-Martinot and Sellers, 2005). Over the past century, cities around the world have grown by spatial extension, independently from institutional boundaries. Today's cities are urban regions that span over large numbers of local jurisdictions or other subnational government territories; sometimes they even stretch across the boundaries of national states. In most of these metropolitan areas, institutional reforms either failed or were unable to keep up with the pace of territorial extension. Given the sustained urban expansion across the world (United Nations, 2009), the goal to reduce "governmental fragmentation" of metropolitan areas (Dente, 1990) by institutional consolidation seems out of reach. This does not mean, however, that nowadays' urban regions are ungovernable or that they are ungoverned. Since the 1990s, researchers have increasingly emphasised the role of policy networks in metropolitan governance, and they have thus discovered a "new regionalism" (see Savitch and Vogel, 2009). As it turns out, hierarchical decision-making by governmental institutions is not the only way to ensure area-wide coordination in metropolitan policy-making. Instead, many metropolitan areas across the world heavily rely on non-hierarchical forms of coordination and cooperation, where political actors act on the basis of agreements reached by negotiation. This observation echoes work on multi-level governance in Europe (see Hooghe and Marks, 2003) showing that negotiation in joint-decision systems (Scharpf, 1997) is paramount to coherent policy-making between a variety of interdependent governmental and non-governmental policy actors across different state levels. This means that most metropolitan areas in the world have been able to strengthen their area-wide governance capacity even though full-fledged "metropolitan governments" (Sharpe, 1995) - advocated by the metropolitan reform tradition or the "old regionalism" approach - will remain a distant dream. With respect to the effectiveness and quality of public services at the metropolitan-level new regionalism, understood as area-wide policy-coordination flowing from complex network governance, has been shown to provide a valid alternative for area-wide policy-making in a context of geopolitical fragmentation (see Kübler, 2005).

As other forms of network governance in complex environments (Papadopoulos, 2003) new regionalism is often condemned as problematic with respect to democratic accountability. Some have criticised that the debate on new regionalism has hitherto excessively focused on aspects of economic competitiveness, thereby evacuating questions of politics and democracy (Swanstrom, 2001, Brenner, 2003). Others have shown that new regionalism sometimes increases inclusiveness of decision processes since this approach involves various civil society actors in policy-making. However, it may at the same time result in blurring the lines of democratic accountability due to a dilution of responsibility across a large variety of policy-actors who are often not electorally accountable (Kübler and Schwab, 2007). Additionally, historical studies have emphasised that the emergence of structures of area-wide governance in response to an increasing functional integration of urban regions has been paralleled by a retreat of electoral (and/or direct democratic) politics to the benefit of de-politicised technocratism in metropolitan policy-making (Koch, 2011: 224). Empirical results thus tend to confirm democratic deficits in new regionalism.

However, research on the democratic quality of new regionalism has mainly focused on institutional aspects of democratic accountability, most notably the role of democratically elected representatives in policy-making at the metropolitan level. This is arguably only a partial view. Democratic accountability means that decision-makers are accountable to citizens who

can exercise some form of control. It is certainly true that electoral processes are the most direct means for citizens to exercise such control: “if voters are satisfied with governmental performance, they will renew their mandate to the incumbents (positive consequence); if not, they will ‘throw the rascals out’ (negative consequence)” (Papadopoulos, 2010). But electoral processes are far from being the only mechanism of public control. In many countries, we are aware of government officials who were forced to resign after allegations or accusations of misconduct in office had found their way into the press. As they painfully found out, “the media are fast gaining power as informal forums of political accountability” (Bovens, 2007: 447).

This power of the media is the topic of this paper that is up to answer the question of whether local media can compensate the lack of democratic accountability in metropolitan governance structures. To examine this research question, we combine media content and survey data from four metropolitan areas in Western Europe (London, Paris, Berlin and Zurich). These two types of data allow us first to look at how media report on metropolitan governance and second at how this reporting style is correlated to reader’s attitudes on democracy.

The article is organized as follows. The next section discusses conceptual issues and formulates a set of exploratory hypotheses. The third section exposes the research design and method in greater detail. The fourth section focuses first on the press coverage of metropolitan policy-making across the four metropolitan areas and across different types of newspapers. Its second part analyses the relationship between media discourses and citizens’ perceptions of government and democracy. The conclusion discusses the findings with respect to the research question formulated at the outset.

2. New regionalism and the media, or: the communicational dimension of democratic accountability

Processes of political communication are crucial to democratic accountability. Indeed, democratic accountability not only depends on the existence of institutional procedures of citizen control by which voters can hold decision-makers accountable - renew their mandate or throw them out of office. Democratic accountability is also conditional to voters’ ability to express satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with policy performance, identify decision-makers and attribute responsibility for policy success or failure to political actors. Hence, democratic accountability is construed in processes of communication that help citizens form their opinion about policy performance and connect their appreciation of those whom they consider responsible. In mass democracies, these communication processes are not of an immediate and interindividual nature, but are mediated primarily by the mass media. Citizens can hold decision-makers accountable for their actions only when mass media provide information about policy decisions and their outcomes. Especially in the local context, local news are the most important source of information on government performance (Grosso and Van Ryzin 2011).

Citizens’ perceptions of the political process, their evaluation of policy performance, their appreciation of parties and elected representatives are formed within processes of public debate. Thus, besides the institutional dimension, there is also a “communicational dimension” of democratic accountability, relating to the public sphere as one of the pillars for democratic legitimacy (see Habermas, 1992). This is acknowledged by the standard model of representative (mass) democracy, where the institutional and the communicational dimension of democratic accountability are generally seen as tightly coupled: elections trigger processes of political communication and (mediated) public debate which, in turn, allow citizens to make informed electoral choices (see Gurevitch and Blumler, 1990). Democratic accountability, therefore,

means public accountability (Bovens, 2007): decision-makers are accountable to the public which, in turn, is constituted through (mediated) processes of public communication.

2.1 The media as an independent accountability forum

In democratic societies, the media function as an “accountability forum” (Bovens, 2007) that is increasingly independent from electoral procedures and logics. There are two reasons for this. First, the institutional and the communicational dimensions of democratic accountability are subject to different time perspectives. While elections are held on a regular basis (e.g. every four years), communication on policy performance and/or responsibility of decision makers is not limited to any particular period. Although there might be peaks of communicational activity at the time of elections, the media can and do inform on policy failures or successes continuously and independently of elections. Even though such information is politically relevant only in relation to some more or less distant moments of electoral control, the media are largely independent from electoral cycles and can thereby play the role of holding decision-makers accountable for their acts in periods between elections.

Second, in the modern democratic state, accountability of decision-makers not only means that they are assessed by the citizens via elections, but they are also evaluated against norms of conduct or standards defined by legal, administrative or professional forums (Bovens, 2007: 456). Decision-makers, be they elected politicians or appointed officials, can be held accountable for the violation of legal norms, malpractice or incompetence - independently from elections. The media contribute to such legal, administrative or professional accountability of decision-makers by uncovering violations of norms (e.g. through investigative journalism) and make this information available to a wider audience. The unwritten laws of political culture can force decision-makers to resign following ‘public pressure’ - even long before a violation of norms or standards has effectively been established by a legal, administrative or professional forum.

As an increasingly powerful and autonomous forum, the media thus play a key role for public accountability in the modern democratic state. This is potentially good news for network governance advocated by new regionalism. Indeed, it means that there is an additional - communicational - channel by which democratic accountability of governance networks can be ensured, besides the various mechanisms of “democratic anchorage” (Sørensen and Torfing, 2005) through which meta-governing representative instances can maintain democratic control over governance networks (Sørensen, 2006). Of course, the communicational construction of democratic accountability of decision-makers via the media requires that these media effectively communicate information about the relevant actors and their decisions, that they debate the quality of policies and assess the role and the responsibilities of the actors involved. Hence, media reporting on metropolitan policy-making and decision-makers can be a good empirical proxy for the communicational dimension of democratic accountability in complex multi-level networks.

With respect to politics, the media are expected not only to serve as a forum for debating ideas and to voice public opinion, but also to “serve as citizens eyes and ears to survey the political scene and the performance of politicians”, as well as to “act as a public watchdog that barks loudly when it encounters misbehaviour, corruption, and abuses of power in the halls of government” (Graber, 2003: 143). However, it would be naïve to assume that the media play this role in a neutral way. As Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) have argued, the media are not simply a mediating or intermediary agent whose function is to bridge the relation between a communicator and an audience as a substitute for interpersonal exchange. The term “the media” is misleading as it suggests the existence of a homogenous and monolithic bloc. In reality, the media is a system composed of a heterogenous multiplicity of competing actors who

have their own preferences and interests. The media thereby add a specific bias to the information they process and to the political content they communicate (see Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999: 250-253, van Dalen 2012). In this sense, journalists can be expected to have an attention bias towards elected decision-makers in comparison to appointed officials. Elections are institutionalised moments of public attention. Individuals standing up for election could therefore be of higher news value to journalists than appointed or non-elected decision-makers. As a consequence, this means that classic political institutions (involving electoral mechanisms of control) are likely to receive more media attention than structures of complex network governance. Moreover, as media seek commercial success, i.e. to maximise audience share, media actors can be inclined to “exaggerate their control functions and focus excessively on the negative aspects of politics” (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999: 252). “Scandalization”, i.e. when media put forward (alleged) scandals in order to increase sales and quotations, in turn raises the question of media accountability: how can the media be brought to behave in a responsible way (Eberwein et al., 2011).

The interpenetration of media and politics is also thought to impact on citizens’ democratic participation in public affairs. As the media increasingly control the public sphere, they also control the construction of public opinion. The “media select which actors will receive attention and frame those actors’ public image” (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999: 251). The media thus have an important role to play in ensuring democratic legitimacy.

Thus, when we examine aspects of media reporting on metropolitan policy-making, we need to take into account the effects of the described media-bias. Personalisation, emphasis on conflict rather than cooperation, a focus on elected actors rather than on non-elected actors, or negativity in media reports on metropolitan policy-making and policy-makers.

2.2 Media reporting and citizens’ perceptions of legitimacy

Having described the first aim of the paper, i.e. assessing how media report on metropolitan politics, we turn to the second interest which lies in the correlation between the style of media reporting on metropolitan politics and citizens’ attitudes. If media serve as an accountability forum, negative and positive reporting on policy-actors and their policy-actions should be related to citizens’ perceptions of how well the political system works. This assumption builds upon the outlined debate on media as watchdogs as well as on the increasing literature on the relationship between media reporting and political attitudes and behaviour. James (2010) shows in an experimental study that information cues on local government performances indeed have an effect on citizens’ attitudes on government’s work. Snyder and Strömberg (2010) present some evidence for a general media effect by relating media coverage of congress men to turnout at the aggregate level. Others look at the effect of television or newspaper usage on attitudes such as political or social trust (Moy and Scheufele 2000, McLeod et al. 1996). However, all these studies only look very general at media reporting, mostly without taking its actual content into account. Studies that really look at media content in detail (Gerhards et al. 2007, Hurrelman et al. 2008) usually do not look at recipient’s attitudes. This shortage of studies might partly be due to the demanding data requirements, since media content data as well as survey data is needed.

We argue that a closer look at media content is needed to better understand relationships between different reporting styles and citizens’ attitudes. We therefore connect to Gerhards et al. (2007) by looking at media reporting in terms of responsibility and competence attributions. As aforementioned, the complex nature of metropolitan politics urges for media that explain who is to blame or praise for policy actions and who is or should be in charge of specific policy problems. With their coding scheme for attributions in press articles, Gerhards et al. (2007)

provide us with a neat tool to look exactly at how communicative accountability in media can work.

Theoretically, we can imagine two kinds of relationships. The optimistic view is to assume an overall positive effect on perceptions of legitimacy if media cover politics in an informative and critical manner. That is to say that any kind of media reporting on relevant policy actors and their work should lead to positive citizens' views on the political system. In technical terms: more attributions in press articles lead to more perceived legitimacy by its readers.

A more nuanced picture that we aim at, however, differentiates between positive and negative reporting, and takes the clarity of political processes that is displayed in the media into account. If media coverage matters, reports on success should be related to positive perceptions of legitimacy, while reports on failure should be rated negatively by readers, just as promoted by the "videomalaise" literature from communication sciences (see Robinson, 1976, Pinkleton et al., 1998). It suggests that negativism in media and campaign ads decreases political efficacy and fosters cynicism among voters.

Moreover, media also mirror how policy actors deliberate on competences. Especially in case of a salient problem or previous failure, policy actors are often asked to take action by other policy actors or even by the media (van Dalen 2012). As this indicates a weakness of the institutionalised accountability structures – they apparently failed if actors need to debate about who is in charge of a policy-problem – we assume a negative relationship between these quarrels of competences and perceptions of legitimacy.

However, we hesitate of speaking of a media effect on attitudes and rather chose the communication sciences' perspective that describes the relationship between news content and its recipients' attitudes as a cycle. First, there is a bias in news choice (Stroud 2011). Citizens tend to opt for news sources that are in line with their political preferences and interests. Second, their attitudes are fostered by media usage because the chosen media content usually confirms their own views and opinions.

Altogether, we hypothesise that media are a relevant accountability forum in the context of multi level politics. In the next section we describe how we seek to confirm this hypothesis by showing first that local media report on multi-level and network politics in a differentiated and detailed manner. Second, we show that significant relationships between media content and political attitudes of its recipients exist. We would have to reject our hypothesis if media reported only on specific actor types and therefore not in an informative way, or if the style of reporting had no relation to political attitudes at all.

3. Research design and data

In this paper, we set out to explore the communicational dimension of democratic accountability in multi level network frameworks, by focusing on media reporting about metropolitan policy-making. The analysis is based on content data of newspaper reporting on metropolitan policy-making in the fields of public transport and economy promotion, as well as survey data collected in four European metropolitan areas. The novelty of our general design lies in this combination of media content data and survey data that enables us to assess both, the style of media reporting, as well as its relationship with political attitudes. This section presents the logic of case selection and the nature of the data collected.

3.1 Case selection

In terms of research strategy, we focus on four large metropolitan areas characterised by institutional fragmentation and complex network governance advocated by new regionalism (Berlin, Paris, Zurich, London). Since we do not have any specific hypotheses referring to differences between Metropolitan areas, our case selection rather relies on a most-different cases design in order to control whether we find our expected relationship in different contexts. Among the four selected cases, London has a general-purpose metropolitan government (Greater London Authority - GLA), and Zurich is characterised by a regional transport government, whereas Berlin and Paris are almost purely network oriented cases. Additionally, the selection of metropolitan areas under scrutiny covers the whole variety of media system types identified by Hallin and Mancini (2004), i.e. the Liberal Model (Britain), the Democratic-Corporatist model (Germany and Switzerland), as well as the Polarised Pluralist Model (France).

In this article, we restrict ourselves to newspaper data that is still one of the most relevant media sources, especially at the local and regional level (Bruns and Himmler 2011). Even though new media types are gaining more relevance, a significant percentage of citizens still read newspaper on a daily basis. In our sample, the French are the laziest newspaper consumers; but still more than 60 per cent identify themselves as readers (Elvestad and Blekesaune 2008: 432). In Switzerland, more than ninety per cent claim that they read a newspaper everyday. Elvestad and Blekesaune also show that newspaper do not compete with the internet necessarily. To the contrast, countries with a high share of internet users also have a high share of newspaper readers (2008: 440). Moreover, it is usually the exposure to newspapers rather than to television or other news sources that is correlated with higher social capital (Beaudoin 2009) or better information (Moy et al. 2004).

With respect to the part of our hypothesis related to different reporting styles, the decisive step lies in the selection of one large audience paper and one quality newspaper in each metropolitan area. We can therefore compare the readership of eight newspapers in four metropolitan regions to test whether the different content and style is correlated to the recipients' political attitudes. The case selection logic is presented in Table 1.

3.2 Newspaper content data¹

For the analysis of media reporting on metropolitan policy-making, data was collected following the strategy suggested by Gerhards et al. (2007) in their analysis of media reporting on policy-making in the EU. The digital archives of the selected newspapers were used to identify articles published in the year 2010 that reported on public transport or on economic promotion in the respective metropolitan areas. The large number of articles thus identified was then reduced by using a random selection of 200 articles for each metropolitan area (100 per policy field), weighted by the importance of the newspapers. The content of these articles was coded by a team of trained coders according to a pre-established code-book aiming to categorise information on policy-actors as well as "attributions of responsibilities and competences" (Gerhards et al., 2007). The coding categories allow the identification of information on actors and attributions. Data on the actor level refer to policy actors that were mentioned at least once in

¹ The media content data has been collected by the project "Cleavages, governance and the media in European metropolitan areas" at the Centre for Democracy Studies in Aarau (ZDA), University of Zurich, funded by the Swiss National Fund in the NCCR Democracy framework. The project team consists of Daniel Kübler, Frank Marcinkowsky (University of Münster), Anna Christmann and Karin Hasler.

an article. Further, information was collected on attributions of responsibilities and competences, i.e. cited statements or comments by journalists in which someone was held accountable for a policy action, or was requested to (not) take action, respectively. Both types of attributions are defined by Gerhards et al. (2007) as consisting of a sender, an addressee and a positive or negative qualification of a specific policy action or outcome. We present simple examples of each a positive and a negative responsibility attribution, as well as a competence attribution:

Positive attribution of responsibility by a journalist (sender) with the Mayor as the addressee:

“The Mayor’s policy successfully contributed to the quality of local transport in our city.”

Negative attribution of responsibility by the Mayor (sender) to the Parliament (addressee):

“The Mayor accused the Parliament of undermining his efforts to promote the local transport of the city by holding back money.”

Competence attribution by the government (sender) with the city (London) as the addressee:

“Basically the government believes that the city should not be in charge of the local transport.”

The analysis presented in this paper combines data from the database on newspaper content with individual level data from a representative survey (see the following section). Due to the combination of these two databases, some cases had to be excluded from the analysis. This is why the number of articles coded in each metropolitan area and retained for the analysis in this paper does not add up to 200 (Table 1).

Table 1: Case selection and data

<i>Metrop. area^a</i>	<i>Population^a</i>	<i>Regionalism^a</i>	<i>Media system^b</i>	<i>Newspaper^c</i>	<i>N of readers^d in survey</i>	<i>N of arti- cles cod- ed</i>
Zurich	1.08 Mio	Fragmented governance	Democratic corporatist	Tages-Anzeiger (TA: q)	266	139
				20 Minuten (MIN: la)	199	15
Berlin	4.3 Mio	Fragmented governance	Democratic corporatist	Berliner Morgen- post (BM: q)	96	112
				Berliner Zeitung (BZ: la)	117	59
Paris	11.2 Mio	Fragmented governance	Polarised pluralist	Le Figaro (LF: q)	35	35
				Le Parisien (LP: la)	113	159
London	10.9 Mio	Metropolitan government (GLA)	Liberal	The Guardian (TG: q)	62	73
				London Evening Standard (LES: la)	95	105
<i>Total</i>					983	697

a: metro areas definition for the year 2000 or near. Source: Hoffmann-Martinot and Sellers (2005)

b: Source: Hallin and Mancini (2004)

c: ‘q’= quality newspaper; ‘la’= large audience newspaper

d: A ‘reader’ is defined as a survey respondent who named the corresponding newspaper when asked the question: “And which newspaper do you use most? Please name only one.”

3.4 Survey data²

For the analysis of perceived legitimacy of the political system, we use individual-level data from an online survey, conducted in October 2010 on a representative sample of 750 respondents in each of the four metropolitan areas under scrutiny and including, among others, questions on newspaper use and political attitudes. Since the survey was not focused specifically on metropolitan or local institutions, survey questions were formulated to gauge respondents' political attitudes more broadly. This represents a limitation for the analysis in as much as we can link local newspaper content data only to very general political attitudes. Still, this problem is common to local democracy studies that often need to use data from national surveys. With one of the rare datasets at the local level, Vetter (2007: 71) has shown that satisfaction with local democracy correlates closely with satisfaction with national democracy in Western Europe. For some of our cases one can even argue that the likelihood that citizens think of the local or regional level when they are asked about their impression of how democracy works in their country, is higher than that they think of the national level (especially for Switzerland as pointed out by Stadelmann-Steffen and Vatter 2012: 542).

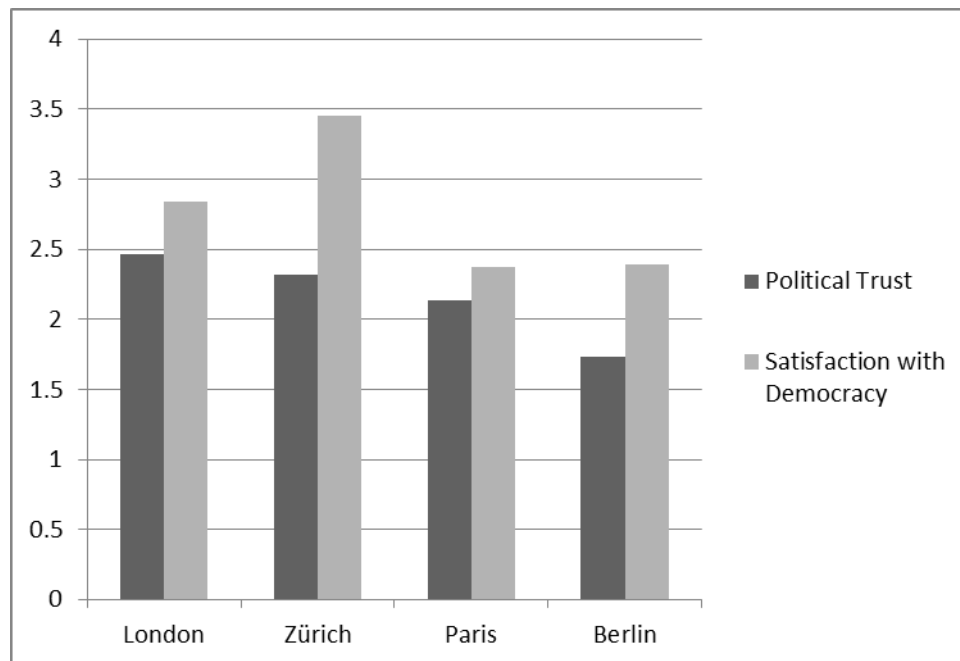
Moreover, we see this as a rather conservative test; if we are to detect a relationship between local media content and general political attitudes, this would also suggest an even stronger relationship between local media content and attitudes towards local institutions or metropolitan governance systems. In contrast, we cannot be completely sure whether this local relationship exists nonetheless, if we do not find any relationship on a general level.

Given this limitation, we use two questions from the survey to operationalize the perceived system legitimacy by citizens: the first seeks to measure respondents' trust in government, the second one gauges their satisfaction with democracy (see methodological appendix). As Weatherford (1992) outlined, legitimacy can be measured either by looking at institutions and procedures, or by assessing citizens' views on the political system. We opt for the latter by analysing the effect of media content on citizens' trust in government as well as on their satisfaction with democracy. Both indicators were part of the survey and fit Weatherford's (1992: 151) suggestion that citizens' legitimacy perceptions of a system depend on their "expectations about the intentions and trustworthiness of other people", as well as on their "perceptions of procedural and distributive fairness".

The results are displayed in Figure 1. We clearly see that the two items do not measure the same thing, especially in the case of Switzerland. While citizens from Zurich do not trust politicians to a large extent, they are still very satisfied with their democratic system. Londoners are both quite trustful as well as satisfied with their political system. Citizens from Berlin are most sceptical towards their politicians and also not overwhelmingly satisfied with democracy. In the case of Paris, trust in government is a little higher compared to Berlin, satisfaction with democracy almost equal.

² The survey data has been collected by the project "The strategies and processes of attitude formation and public participation in comparative perspective " at the Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, University of Zurich, funded by the Swiss National Fund in the NCCR Democracy framework. The project team consists of Werner Wirth, Christian Schemer, Rinaldo Kühne and Martin Wettstein. We are thankful to the whole team for sharing their collected data with us for the present paper.

Figure 1: Trust in government and satisfaction with democracy in four metro areas (mean values; minimum 1, maximum 5, N=983)



Apart from these two dependent variables, we use several controls from the survey. Specifically, we assessed socio-demographics (age, gender, education), a measure for newspaper gratification and some attitude items (see Table 4 in the methodological appendix for a detailed description of all variables used).

The combination of the two datasets for the subsequent analysis also resulted in a drop out of survey respondents. Included are only those respondents who indicated to use one of the newspapers coded in the content analysis as their main newspaper (Table 1).

4. Results

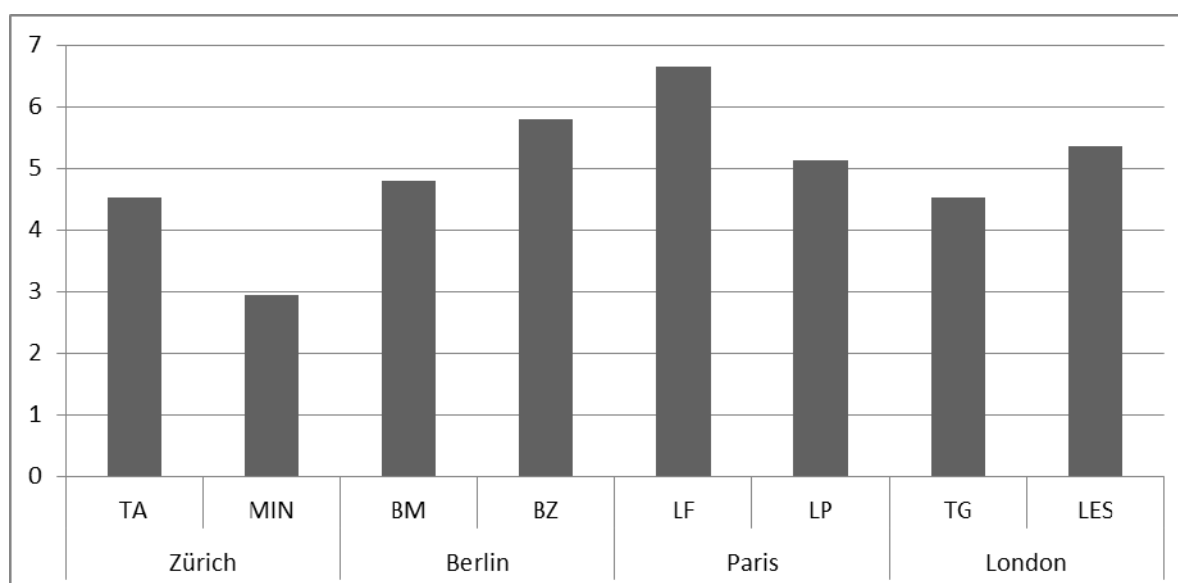
The results are presented in two steps. The first part (4.1) looks at the content of media reporting on metropolitan policy-making. Do the media rather focus on governmental actors such as mayors, local parliaments or - in the case of London - the metropolitan governance, or do they also focus on other actors and take new regionalist arrangements, i.e. complex governance networks into account? Are they positive in emphasizing who is responsible for success or do they mainly blame actors if they fail? The second part (4.2) focuses on the relationship between the content of media reporting on metropolitan governance and perceptions of legitimacy. More precisely, we strive to answer the question whether media content has an effect on survey respondents' perceptions of legitimacy, and, if yes, in what way.

4.1 How the media report on metropolitan policy-making

To get an impression of the media coverage, we present an overview of actors and responsibility attributions in the 697 articles under scrutiny in our content analysis. As explained above, the aim of our analysis was to examine how local newspapers report on metropolitan policy-making and governance. What kind of actors do they link to policy decisions, and whom do they hold accountable for outcomes?

First, we look at how actor-centred the different newspaper reports are, i.e. how many unique actors do they mention per article? Figure 2 shows some differences between the metropolitan areas in terms of newspaper coverage. Zurich papers do mention only four or less different actors per article, while Paris papers usually refer to five or even more than six different actors per article when reporting on local transport or economy promotion in the metropolitan area. Berlin and London newspapers are in the middle, mentioning between four and six different actors per article. Beside these differences across metropolitan areas, there are unsystematic differences across newspapers within metropolitan areas. Quality newspapers in Zurich and Paris (TA, LF) are more attentive to policy-actors than large audience newspapers, whereas the picture is the other way around in Berlin and London, where policy actors receive more attention in reports by the large audience newspaper (BZ, LES).

Figure 2: Mean number of policy-actors mentioned per article (N=697) across different newspapers in four metropolitan areas



Beyond the simple mentioning of policy actors, it is more interesting to note what kind of actors actually appear in newspaper articles. For that purpose we defined nine actor types³ whose appearances in the media reports on metropolitan policy-making are displayed in Table 2 and Figure 3. As London is the only metropolitan area with a consolidated metropolitan government, it is there that we find the metropolitan government ('metro' - in this case the GLA) mentioned as a policy actor by the newspapers under scrutiny. However, Zurich and Paris show also some appearances of regional actors in the newspapers, referring to policy-specific institutions.

Some other results are also not very surprising: Newspapers in Paris and London report a lot on the Central State, while subnational authorities (such as municipalities, the cantons or the Länder) are more present in Swiss and German newspapers. This plausibly reflects the differences between the Unitary States (United Kingdom and France) on the one hand, where the central government plays a stronger role in metropolitan policy-making, and the Federal States (Germany and Switzerland) on the other hand, where the federal government has only limited powers at the metropolitan level.

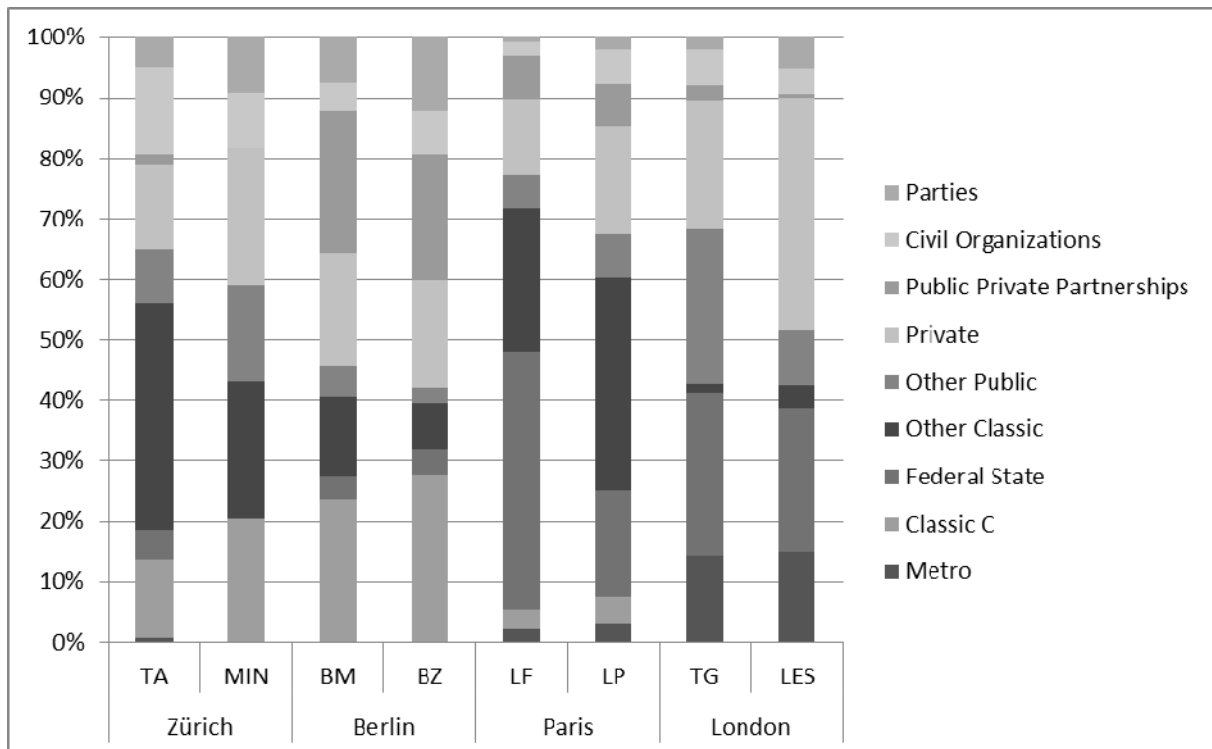
³ For the detailed description of the actor categories, see the methodological appendix.

What is interesting are the differences across newspapers within metropolitan areas. In Zurich, the forum paper Tages-Anzeiger reports a lot more on classic institutions of the various state levels, while the tabloid commuter paper 20 Minuten focuses more on private actors and parties, which might be easier to personalize. The large audience London Evening Standard also reports a lot more on private actors than the higher quality The Guardian. In Paris, Le Parisien is more locally oriented than Le Figaro which refers mostly to national actors. The two German papers are most similar in their focus on classic city institutions and public private partnerships that include mostly German Railway companies both on the national and the local level.

Table 2: Actor types mentioned in newspapers articles (absolute numbers)

	News- paper	Metro	Classic	Nat. State	Other Classic	Other Pub- lic	Private	PPP	Civil Org	Parties	Total
ZH	TA	4	82	31	236	56	87	13	90	31	630
	MIN	0	9	0	10	7	10	0	4	4	44
BE	BM	0	126	21	71	26	101	125	26	40	536
	BZ	0	95	14	26	9	61	71	24	42	342
PA	LF	5	8	99	55	13	29	17	5	2	233
	LP	25	37	142	287	58	146	58	46	16	815
LO	TG	47	0	89	5	84	70	9	19	7	330
	LES	83	0	135	21	51	217	3	24	29	563
Total		164	357	531	711	304	721	296	238	171	3493

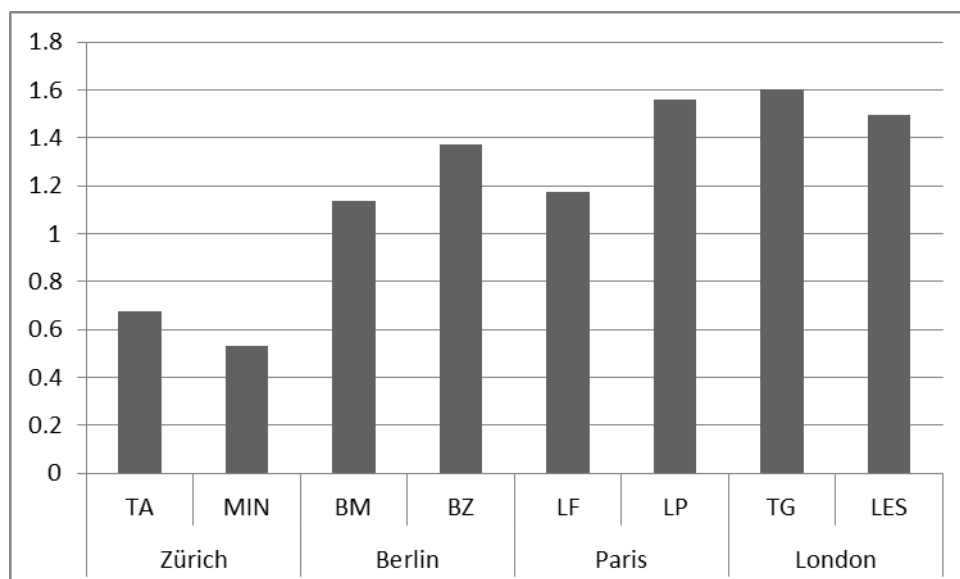
Figure 3: Actor types covered in articles in percent (by newspaper)



In what context do the newspapers mention the various actors? The aforementioned coding of attributions of responsibility and competence aims at gathering more information on how the newspapers report on the actor's role in policy decision making processes. By distinguishing the tonality of attributions (i.e. positive or negative), we can see how often actors are praised or blamed for policy outcomes or processes, or whether they are asked to take action.

Figures 4 and 5 show the number of attributions per article for the different newspapers. Only attributions that addressed one of the nine defined actor groups are included. All kind of attributions of responsibility and competences are displayed in Figure 4; Figure 5 compares positive and negative responsibility attributions to competence attributions. Again, we see large differences across as well as within metropolitan areas. Zurich newspapers do not often use attributions in their articles, London newspapers most. There are also differences across newspapers within metropolitan areas, but as seen before these differences are not systematically linked to the type of paper (quality versus large audience).

Figure 4: Mean number of attributions per article in different newspapers

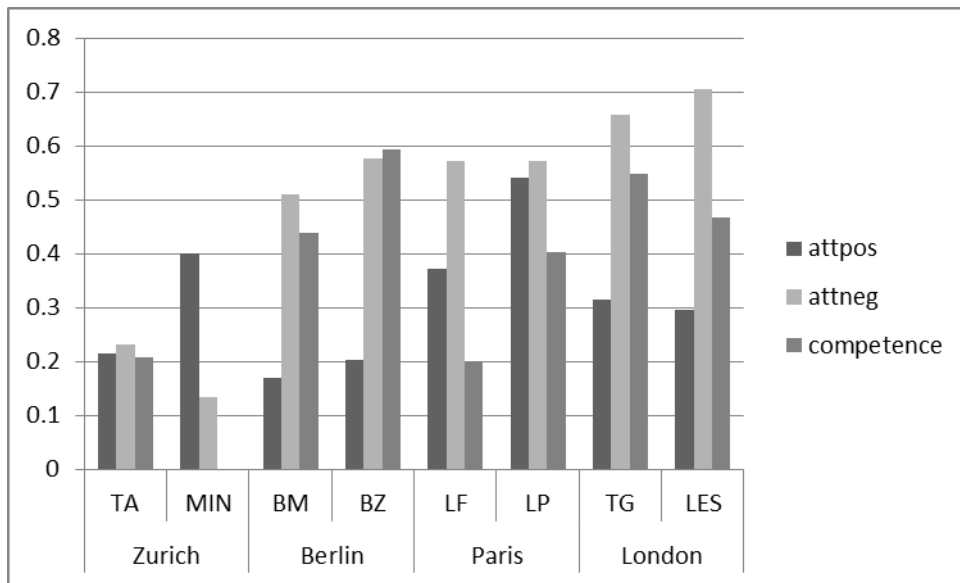


The difference between positive and negative responsibility attributions is also quite large (Figure 5). Especially newspapers in Berlin and London write a lot more about who failed than who was successful. Paris papers show a similar share of positive and negative attributions, though with slightly more negative attributions as well. In Zurich, the tonality is mainly positive: the Tages-Anzeiger (TA) is rather balanced, while ‘20 minuten’ (MIN) more often reports positively than negatively. There are some unsystematic differences across types of newspapers. Contrary to our expectations, some but not all large audience newspapers (the Berliner Zeitung [BZ] as well as The London Evening Standard [LES]) are more negative than the quality newspapers. In Paris, the large audience Paper Le Parisien [LP] is more positive in its tonality than the high quality paper Le Figaro [LF] In Zurich the large audience commuter paper ‘20 Minuten’ is - surprisingly - even more positive about actors’ roles in metropolitan policy-making.⁴

The number of competence attributions also varies to a substantial extent. While in the case of Zurich, the Tages-Anzeiger uses more attributions than 20 Minuten in general, Le Parisien and The Guardian use a remarkably high number of competence attributions, compared to their national counterparts. In Berlin, both newspapers show a surprisingly similar pattern of used attribution types, they only differ in the total number of attributions, as seen in Figure 4.

⁴ This finding can, however, be explained by the fact that as a commuter paper, the commercial success of ‘20 minuten’ depends on the cooperation of public transport companies to provide boxes and dispose of used papers (e.g. on the stations or in trains, buses, or trams). This is a strong incentive for the editors of ‘20 minuten’ to report positively on public transport companies and public transport policy in general. This has been confirmed in an informal interview with a journalist from ‘20 minuten’ in early 2012, confirming the existence of an editorial directive to present Zurich’s major transport companies in a positive way. As the newspaper articles under scrutiny in our database focus on metropolitan public transport as one of two policy field, this selection might therefore have introduced a bias towards positive tonality of attributions of responsibility in the case of ‘20 minuten’.

Figure 5: Positive and negative attributions per article in different newspapers



Who is blamed or praised by the newspaper? Figure 6 shows the addressees of the attributions per newspaper in per cent. Compared to the overall number of actors presented in Figure 3, public private partnerships in Berlin and the national state in Paris are overrepresented as addressees of attributions. In London, metro institutions are more often addressees than they are usually mentioned in articles. In Zurich, the Tages-Anzeiger (TA) addresses all actors proportionally to the number of times they are mentioned in articles, while 20 Minuten (MIN) addresses more often parties and civil organizations. Altogether this speaks for a good job by the media in identifying responsible actors. In the case of Paris and London, the national Government and the GLA are important actors for the metropolitan region. In the case of Berlin the transport companies, which can be found in the data as public private partnerships, were important actors in the struggles on the local transport system.

Figure 6: Addressees of responsibility and competence attributions per newspaper in percent

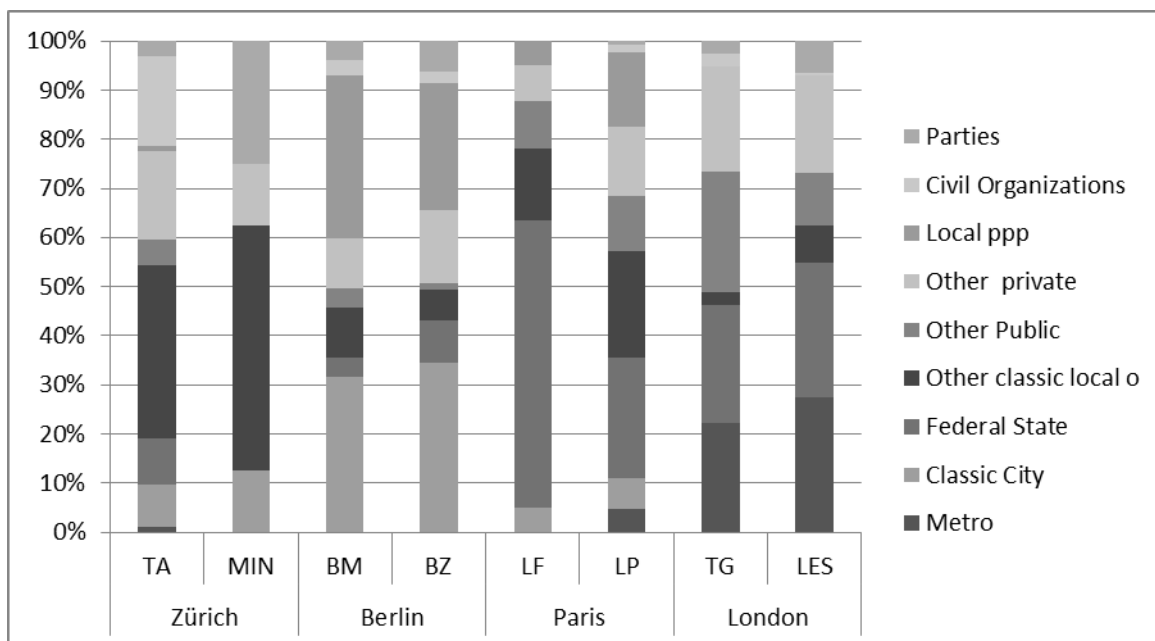
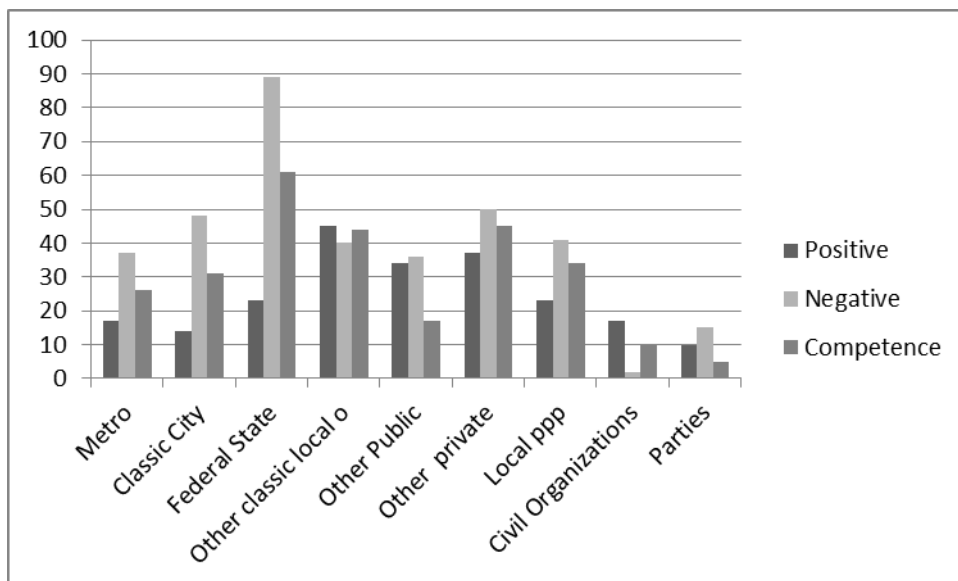


Figure 7: Positive, negative and competence attributions per addressee in per cent



Last, we take a look at how the different actor types are addressed by positive, negative or competence attributions (Figure 7). Overall, we found more negative than positive attributions, which is in line with the literature on the media-bias (see Robinson, 1976, Pinkleton et al., 1998). The national state, classic city institutions, metro institutions and private public partnerships are especially often criticized in the media, compared to other actor types. This is interesting, as other local institutions are most often praised - a result which is indicative of 'blame shifting' strategies whereby local actors attribute the responsibility for local problems to higher state levels. Civil organizations overwhelmingly often receive positive attributions; they indeed seem to have a positive image. Surprisingly, also private actors are quite often addressed in a positive way.

To sum up, we found different contents and tonalities of media reporting across metropolitan newspapers, which is decisive for our analysis in the next part. We have seen that Zurich has two quite different newspapers that both report rather positively about actors' roles in metropolitan policy-making, however with the *Tages-Anzeiger* reporting in a much more detailed way about the role of institutional and public actors than *20 Minuten*. The two newspapers from Berlin are rather similar in their reporting style with respect to actors covered and their predominantly negative tone. However, the *Berliner Zeitung* (large audience paper) uses more attributions in total than the *Berliner Morgenpost*. In Paris, *Le Parisien* has a more local focus than *Le Figaro* and also uses more attributions. The London newspapers are most critical in terms of number and type of attributions, with *The Guardian* focusing more on public actors than *The London Evening Standard*.

How can we interpret these results with respect to the role of the media for the communicational dimension of democratic accountability in metropolitan governance? As a first impression, we have seen that the media indeed report on different actor types, including classic governmental institutions as well as other private and public actors and even public private partnerships. However, some of the newspapers tend to focus a lot on national actors rather than on local ones - this is especially the case in Paris. Moreover, some of them focus strongly on classic governmental institutions, while reporting only 20 per cent (*Le Figaro*), respectively 40 per cent (*Le Parisien*) on other actor types. The same is true for the *Tages-Anzeiger* in Zurich that reports to 43 per cent on non-institutional actors. All other papers report on differ-

ent actor types in a more balanced way. Hence, media reporting on metropolitan policy-making tends to convey a diverse picture of the actors involved in metropolitan policy-making. This finding is important in the sense that it suggests that the increasingly fragmented governance structure of large metropolitan areas - empirically established by many researchers on metropolitan governance - is also adequately reflected in media reporting on metropolitan governance. Faced with increasingly complex governance networks, the media do not resort to limiting coverage to the traditional governmental institutions just because these are easier to cover.

4.2 Media reporting and citizen perceptions of legitimacy

We now turn to the correlations between different media reporting styles and citizens' legitimacy perceptions. With respect to content data, we focus on the number of attributions per article for all different attribution types for the following analysis. As dependent variables, we use trust in government and satisfaction with democracy as measures for perceived democratic legitimacy.

We should keep in mind, that the survey items were not specifically related to metropolitan governance. Still, the media content data consisted of articles on local politics only (metropolitan public transport and economy promotion). We can therefore interpret the results as the effect of local media content on general legitimacy perceptions (which are usually closely correlated to local legitimacy perceptions (Vetter 2007)).

We present four random intercept regression models with an individual and a newspaper level for each dependent variable: One testing the effect of the overall number of attributions per article, one for positive, one for negative and one for competence attributions. We conducted a Bayesian estimation due to the limited number of not randomly selected upper level groups (newspapers=8) (Jackman 2009: xxxi). Detailed descriptions of all variables can be found in the appendix.

Table 3 shows both the results for the estimation of satisfaction with democracy as well as trust in government.

Looking at the effects at the individual level in the upper part of the table first, most of the included controls have an effect on both satisfaction with democracy as well as trust in government. The two models show that readers that evaluate their main newspaper as critical and useful as an information source are more trustful and satisfied with democracy. Moreover, being conservative increases individual trust and democracy satisfaction. All other independent variables have positive effects as well, except age and gender. Older people trust the government less than younger ones, whereas men and women have equal levels of trust in government and satisfaction with democracy. All these individual variables are included in the random-intercept models 1 to 4, however not displayed in Table 3. Their effects do not change to a substantial extent in the different models.

Our main interest is in the relationship between the newspaper level variables and our dependent variables. The analysis of variance in the top of Table 3 shows that in the case of satisfaction with democracy, 14 per cent of the variance can be explained by the newspaper citizens read. In case of trust in government, we find 8 per cent unexplained variance at the newspaper level, which is still a substantial part of the total variance. It matters for perceptions of legitimacy, which newspaper a respondent reads. To explain this variance, models 1 to 4 shown in the lower part of Table 3 each include either the number of all types of attributions per article (model 1) or one specific type of attribution, only (models 2 to 4). While the total number of attributions per article is negatively correlated with satisfaction with democracy, it is not related to trust in government. Our very general – optimistic – hypothesis that any kind of attribution increases the reader's perception of legitimacy proves to be wrong.

Table 3: Multilevel Regressions for trust in government

Bayesian Multi-Level Estimation for Satisfaction with Democracy and Trust in Government							
Number of Obs		967	Number of groups (newspapers)		8		
Obs per group:		min = 35	avg = 122.9		max = 266		
Satisfaction with Democracy			Trust in Government				
ANOVA Empty Model :							
Var Newspaper level		.159		.080			
Var Individual level		.990		.870			
14% unexplained variance at newspaper level.			8% unexplained variance at newspaper level.				
Individual level: Random Intercept Model with explanatory variables at individual level only.							
Mean		90% Credible Interval		Mean		90% Credible Interval	
Newspaper Gratification	0.071	0.006		0.138	0.079		
		0.136			0.200		
Political Interest	0.094	0.042		0.038	-0.009		
		0.146			0.083		
Left Right Iden.	0.037	0.014		0.045	0.024		
		0.060			0.066		
Satisfaction with Life	0.238	0.180		0.127	0.075		
		0.297			0.180		
Education	0.347	0.147		0.145	0.026		
		0.576			0.298		
Age	-0.004	-0.007		-0.006	-0.009		
		0.000			-0.002		
Party Affiliation	0.147	0.042		0.066	-0.018		
		0.255			0.151		
Sex (male=1)	-0.002	-0.103		0.064	-0.016		
		0.096			0.144		
Newspaper level: Random Intercept Models with one explanatory variable at newspaper level. All explanatory variables from individual level included, but not displayed here.							
Model 1							
Constant	2.112	1.248		1.341	0.484		
		2.913			2.234		
Attributions per Article	-0.635	-1.189		0.080	-0.572		
		-0.020			0.728		
Model 2							
Constant	1.900	1.371		1.622	1.001		
		2.407			2.208		
Competence	-1.542	-0.599		-0.504	-1.684		
		-2.387			0.819		
Model 3							
Constant	1.903	1.121		1.367	0.675		
		2.618			2.107		
Negative Responsibility	-1.134	-2.271		0.142	-1.107		
		0.212			1.300		
Model 4							
Constant	1.119	0.371		0.955	0.392		
		1.916			1.473		
Positive Responsibility	0.750	-1.371		1.564	0.353		
		2.731			2.930		

Remarks: Bayesian Estimation with RJAGS. Number of Iterations: 500000. Uninformative Priors for all estimated values (dnorm 0, 0.0001))

To the contrary, attributions are even negatively correlated with satisfaction with democracy. The more citizens are informed about competence quarrels, policy successes and failures, the less they are satisfied with their political system. The uninformed citizen seems to be the satisfied citizen.

As hypothesized before, it is more illuminating to look at the different attribution types. Models 2 to 4 show that different types of attributions indeed are correlated with perceptions of legitimacy in a different way. Looking at model 2 for both dependent variables, we see that competence attributions are negatively related to legitimacy perceptions, even though the credible interval in the case of trust in government includes zero. In case of satisfaction with democracy, one competence attribution per article lowers individual satisfaction with democracy by 1.5 points on a scale from 1 to 5. Model 3 shows that negative responsibility attributions also tend to be negatively correlated with satisfaction with democracy; however the effect is slightly smaller and not significant at a 90% confidence level. Positive responsibility attributions are correlated to trust in government, only. One praise of an actor's policy- action per article increases individual trust by 1.5 points.

Altogether our results confirm our main hypothesis: Media content is relevant for perceptions of legitimacy by the citizens. Media as a watchdog matters. Readers of media reports on competence quarrels – that are mostly related to a previous failure – are less satisfied with the political system. Readers of media reports on successes, trust in government. We take this as a proof for the importance of the communicational dimension of democratic accountability for overall system legitimacy. The media enable citizens to evaluate the political system on the basis of detailed information on responsibilities and competences, which is in line with recent literature on the importance of local media for citizens' attitudes and knowledge (Moy et al. 2004, Moy and Scheufele 2000, McLeod et al. 1996). This also shows that the coding tool developed by Gerhards et al. (2007) is useful to look at media's role as provider of communicational accountability.

The results are especially interesting when we think of how the analysed newspapers use the different types of attributions. We could not identify systematic differences between quality and large audience papers, which indicates that no general statement about the contribution of specific newspaper types to communicational accountability is possible. Rather, the individual reporting styles are relevant. However, we have seen the example of the commuter paper *20 Minuten* that does not report on competences struggles or negative attributions at all, which indicates that there might exist systematic differences between commuter or tabloid papers and quality papers.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to explore the role of the media in metropolitan governance, with the objective to establish how they contribute to public accountability at the metropolitan level via what we have called the communicational dimension of democratic accountability. We looked at three metropolitan areas (Paris, Berlin and Zurich) characterised by complex network governance as advocated by new regionalism, as well as at one metropolitan area featuring a consolidated metropolitan government as advocated by the classic approach to regionalism (London and its Greater London Authority). In a first step, we analysed the content of newspaper reporting on metropolitan policy-making in the four metropolitan areas under scrutiny. In a second step, we explored the relationship between such media content and perceptions of legitimacy by the citizens within those metropolitan areas.

Regarding media reporting on metropolitan policy-making, the findings suggest that the media convey a quite differentiated picture of policy actors and their responsibilities. In all met-

ropolitan areas, newspapers cover a large variety of policy actors and present them as crucial players in metropolitan policy-making. The portrayals given by the newspapers were found to adequately reflect the differences between types of regionalism implemented in the metropolitan areas under scrutiny, as well as wider institutional differences between them. For instance, London's metropolitan government institutions often appear in the media, while private actors and public-private-partnerships are reported on in the other metropolitan areas. Similarly, media reports also reflect differences in centralisation across countries, with the national government being more present in media reports in London and Paris than in Berlin and Zurich. All of these actors are attributed responsibility for metropolitan policy-making in the media. Hence, not only governmental actors, but also private actors and mixed arrangements receive praise and criticism for metropolitan policy-making in the media. We can therefore say that not only elected actors, but also non-elected actors are held accountable for their actions in the media. This finding provides empirical support for the idea that the media are an additional - communicational - channel by which democratic accountability of governance networks in metropolitan areas is ensured.

With respect to overall legitimacy measured in terms of citizens' perceptions, the analysis of this paper also supports the idea that the communicational dimension of democratic accountability plays an important role. There is a significant relationship between the ways in which the newspaper reported on metropolitan policy-making and the levels of system legitimacy perceived by the citizens. In other words: the news stories and the public images of policy actors and policy-making do matter for legitimacy. Newspapers with a high density of responsibility and competence attributions, thus those that explain who is to praise or to blame in metropolitan policy-making are related to their readers' individual perceptions of legitimacy negatively. As mainly competence and negative attributions show this relationship, the detected correlations are in line with the idea of negativism and political efficacy in communication sciences. Positive attributions, to the contrast, indeed are related to higher levels of trust in government. Media coverage of policy successes therefore is highly important for governmental actors.

Altogether, our findings nicely connect to former media content studies by showing the relevance of media content for political attitudes, even in very complex network structures as can be found in metropolitan areas. The relationship seems to be rather complex, however. More research on content data in combination with surveys is needed to grasp the exact mechanism of how different reporting styles influence political attitudes and behaviour. Especially the the direction of the causal effect and the differences between satisfaction with democracy and trust in government could not be solved here. Experiments like in the research on television effects (Mutz and Reeves 2005) are also a possibility to learn more about the exact causal effect behind the detected relationship.

6. References

- Beaudin (2009): Exploring the association between news exposure and social capital: Evidence of variance by ethnicity and medium. In: *Communication Research* 35, S. 611–636.
- Bovens, M. (2007) Analysing and assessing accountability: a conceptual framework. *European law journal*, 13, 447-468.
- Brenner, N. (2003) Standortpolitik, state rescaling and the new metropolitan governance in Western Europe. *DISP*, 152, 15-25.

- Bruns, Christian; Himmeler, Oliver (2011): Newspaper circulation and local government efficiency. In: *Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 113 (2), S. 470–492.
- Curran, J., Iyengar, S., Lund, A. B. & Salvaara-Moring, I. (1998) Media system, public knowledge and democracy. *European journal of communication*, 24, 5-26.
- Dente, B. (1990) Metropolitan Governance Reconsidered, or How to Avoid Errors of the Third Type. *Governance*, 3, 55-74.
- Eberwein, T., Fengeler, S., Lauk, E. & Leppik-Bork, T. (Eds.) (2011) *Mapping media accountability - in Europe and beyond*, Köln, van Halem Verlag.
- Elvestad, Eiri; Blekesaune, Arild (2008): Newspaper Readers in Europe: A Multilevel Study of Individual and National Differences. In: *European Journal of Communication* 23 (4), S. 425–447.
- Gerhards, J., Offerhaus, A. & Roose, J. (2007) Die öffentliche Zuschreibung von Verantwortung. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 59, 105-124.
- Graber, D. (2003) The media and democracy: beyond myths and stereotypes. *Annual review of political science*, 6, 139-160.
- Grosso, Ashley L.; van Ryzin, Gregg G. (2011): How Citizens View Government Performance Reporting. Results of a National Survey. In: *Public Performance & Management Review* 35 (2), S. 235–250.
- Gurevitch, M. & Blumler, J. G. (1990) Political communication systems and democratic values. IN Lichtenberg, J. (Ed.) *Democracy and the mass media*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Habermas, J. (1992) *Faktizität und Geltung. Diskurstheorie des Rechts und des demokratischen Rechtsstaats*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp.
- Hallin, D. C. & Mancini, P. (2004) *Comparing media systems. Three models of media and politics*, New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Hoffmann-Martinot, V. & Sellers, J. (Eds.) (2005) *Metropolitanization and political change*, Opladen, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Hooghe, L. & Marks, G. (2003) Unraveling the central state, but how? Types of multi-level governance. *American Political Science Review*, 97, 233-243.
- Hurrelmann, Achim; Schneider, Steffen; Steffek, Jens (2008): Legitimacy in an age of global politics. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan (Transformations of the state).
- Jackman, Simon (2009): Bayesian analysis for the social sciences. Chichester, U.K: Wiley (Wiley series in probability and statistics). Online verfügbar unter <http://lib.myilibrary.com/detail.asp?ID=235479>.
- James, Oliver (2010): Performance Measures and Democracy: Information Effects on Citizens in Field and Laboratory Experiments. In: *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21, S. 399–418.
- Koch, P. (2011) *Governancewandel und Demokratie in Schweizer Agglomerationen*, Baden-Baden, Nomos.
- Kübler, D. (2005) *La métropole et le citoyen. Les agglomérations vues par leurs habitants*, Lausanne, Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes.

- Kübler, D. & Schwab, B. (2007) New regionalism in five Swiss metropolitan areas. An assessment of inclusiveness, deliberation and democratic accountability. *European Journal of Political Research*, 46, 473-502.
- Linder, W. (2010) *Swiss democracy. Possible solutions to conflict in multi-cultural societies*, New York, St. Martin's Press.
- Mazzoleni, G. & Schulz, W. (1999) 'Mediatization' of politics: a challenge for democracy? *Political Communication*, 16, 247-261.
- McLeod, Jack M.; Daily, Katie; Guo, Zhongshi; Eveland, William P.; Bayer, Jan; Yang, Seungchan; Wang, Hsu (1996): Community Integration, Local Media Use, and Democratic Processes. In: *Communication Research* 23 (2), S. 179–209.
- Moy, Patricia; Mc Cluskey, Michael R.; McCoy, Kelley; Spratt, Margaret A. (2004): Political Correlates of Local News Media Use. In: *Journal of Communication* 54 (3), S. 532–546.
- Moy, Patricia; Scheufele, Dietram A. (2000): Media effects on political and social trust. In: *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 77, S. 744–759.
- Papadopoulos, Y. (2003) Cooperative forms of governance: problems of democratic accountability in complex environments. *European Journal of Political Research*, 42, 473-501.
- Papadopoulos, Y. (2010) Accountability and multi-level governance: more accountability, less democracy? *West European Politics*, 33, 1030-1049.
- Pinkleton, B. E., Weintraub Austin, E. & Fortman, K. K. H. (1998) Relationships of media use and political disaffection to political efficacy and voting behaviour. *Journal of broadcasting & electronic media*, 42, 34-49.
- Robinson, M. J. (1976) Public affairs television and the growth of political malaise: the case of the 'selling of the Pentagon' *American Political Science Review*, 70, 409-432.
- Savitch, H. & Vogel, R. K. (2009) Regionalism and urban politics. IN Davies, J. S. & Imbroscio, D. L. (Eds.) *Theories of urban politics*. 2 ed. London, Sage.
- Scharpf, F. (1997) *Games real actors play. Actor-centered institutionalism and policy research*, Boulder (Co), Westview.
- Sharpe, L. J. (Ed.) (1995) *The government of world cities. The future of the metro model*, Chichester, Wiley.
- Stadelmann-Steffen; Isabelle; Vatter, Adrian (2012): Does Satisfaction with Democracy Really Increase Happiness? Direct Democracy and Individual Satisfaction in Switzerland. In: *Political Behavior* 34, S. 535–559.
- Stroud, Natalie Jomini (2011): *Niche news. The politics of news choice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sørensen, E. (2006) Meta-governance: the changing role of politicians in processes of democratic governance. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 36, 79-97.
- Sørensen, E. & Torfing, J. (2005) The democratic anchorage of governance networks. *Scandinavian political studies*, 28, 195-218.
- Snyder, James M.; Strömberg, David (2010): Press Coverage and Political Accountability. In: *J POLIT ECON* 118 (2), S. 355–408.

- Swanstrom, T. (2001) What we argue about when we argue about regionalism. *Journal of urban affairs*, 23, 479-496.
- United Nations (2009) World urbanization prospects. The 2009 revision. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.
- van Dalen, Arjen (2012): Structural Bias in Cross-National Perspective : How Political Systems and Journalism Cultures Influence Government Dominance in the News. In: *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 17 (1), S. 32–55.
- Vetter, Angelika (2007): Local politics. A resource for democracy in Western Europe? Lanham, Md: Lexington Books (New directions in culture and governance).
- Weatherford, S. M. (1992) Measuring political legitimacy. *American Political Science Review*, 86, 149-166.

7. Methodological appendix

Table 4: Description of variables

<i>Source</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Concept /survey question</i>
Media content database	attproart	Number of attributions per article (all attributions, positive, negative, competence) for the newspaper that is mainly read (self-reported, see question in the next column)	And which newspaper do you read most frequently? Please tick only one.
	attposproart		
	attnegproart		
	attcompproart		
Online survey			
	Trust in government	1 Strongly disagree 5 Strongly agree	And now a general question about your opinion of the government. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement. Most of the time we can trust people in government to do what is right.
	Satisfaction with democracy	1 Very dissatisfied 5 Very satisfied	On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works [in country]? Please answer on a scale ranging from “very dissatisfied” to “very satisfied”.
	Newspaper Gratification	Factor constructed on the basis of four survey items, each asked on a scale from 1 not fulfilled at all to 5 completely fulfilled. See Table 5 for details on factor analysis.	Item1: Provides analysis and interpretation of complex problems
			Item 2: Motivates ordinary people to get involved in public discussions of important issues
			Item 3: Investigates claims and statements made by the government
			Item 4: Is an adversary of public officials by being constantly sceptical of their actions
	Political Interest	1 Not at all interested 5 Very interested	How interested would you say you are in politics? Please answer on a scale ranging from "not at all interested" to "very interested"?

	Left Right self placement	1 Left 10 Right	In politics people sometimes talk of “left” and “right”. Where would you place yourself on a scale ranging from “left” to “right”?
	Satisfaction with life	1 Extremely satisfied 5 Extremely satisfied	All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays? Please answer on a scale ranging from “extremely dissatisfied” to “extremely satisfied”.
	Education	Different Scales per country (between 12 and 22) Standardized to 0 (lowest education) to 1 (highest education)	What is the highest educational level you have obtained, i.e. diploma or certificate awarded, or examination passed? Please tick only the highest one.
	Party affiliation	1 Yes, I see myself belonging to a specific party. 0 No or not sure	Many people feel they belong to a political party. There are also many people who do not feel they belong to a party. Do you see yourself as belonging to a party, for example
	age	Age in years	How old are you?
	male	1 male 0 female	-

Table 5: Factor analysis to construct Newspaper gratification

Factor analysis/correlation Number of obs = 34667 (based on all cases)
Method: principal factors Retained factors = 1
Rotation: (unrotated) Number of params = 4

Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor1	2.30158	2.36368	1.1582	1.1582
Factor2	-0.06210	0.04836	-0.0312	1.1270
Factor3	-0.11046	0.03137	-0.0556	1.0714
Factor4	-0.14183	.	-0.0714	1.0000

LR test: independent vs. saturated: $\chi^2(6) = 6.0e+04$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.0000$

Factor loadings (pattern matrix) and unique variances

Variable	Factor1	Uniqueness
F37_1R	0.7864	0.3816
F37_2R	0.7640	0.4163
F37_6R	0.7474	0.4415
F37_10R	0.7355	0.4591

Scoring coefficients (method = regression)

Variable	Factor1
-----+	
F37_1R	0.30771
F37_2R	0.27527
F37_6R	0.25560
F37_10R	0.24218

Table 7: Coded Policy-Actors

Actor Type	Explanenation
"Metro"	Actor at the metropolitan level.
"Classic City"	Actor from the central city, e.g. Mayor or city parliament.
"Federal State"	Actor from national level. E.g. national government or parliament.
"Other classic local or regional institutions"	Any actor from a classical political level (i.e. not metropolitan and not central city). e.g. municipal politicians.
"Other Public"	Public agencies or companies.
"Other private"	Profit-oriented private actors that do not include any public actor.
"Local ppp"	Public private partnerships, e.g. agencies.
"Civil Organizations"	Non-profit oriented organization.
"Parties"	All parties or its members if they are not mentioned as representatives of the executive or legislative.